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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA ? DAS PATTON, NEA/PI, AND NEA/MAG  
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SUBJECT: MEPI UPDATE FOR MOROCCO

REF: 07 Rabat 1724

11. Summary: This cable highlights MEPI programs and initiatives in Morocco from January 1-March 31. During the quarter, NEA DAS Kent Patton visited Morocco and post approved a new local grant proposal. Highlights from existing programs include activities by the Advancing Learning and Employability for a Better Future (ALEF) literacy project, the American Bar Association (ABA), the MEPI Alumni Network, the MEPI Student Leaders program, the Moroccan Center for Civic Education (MCCE), the Economic Justice Regional Program, and the Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC). Implementers are partnering with local NGOs at the grassroots level to support numerous programs committed to reform in the four MEPI pillars. End Summary.

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MEPI VISITORS  
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12. NEA's DAS Kent Patton visited Morocco January 16-19 with the Director of MEPI Regional Office in Tunis Peter Mulrean. The two visitors had a wide-ranging meeting with the MFA's Director of Bilateral Affairs Youssef Amrani; reviewed election results with political party leaders, MEPI implementers and civil society members; discussed the issue of press freedom with prominent journalists and met with members of the Moroccan MEPI Alumni Network. They also met with emboffs to discuss the new Democracy Working Group/Goal Team program and ways of improving efficiency of MEPI programs

13. MEPI Washington sent two monitors from Management Systems International to Morocco March 9-April 10 to evaluate the effectiveness of the MEPI program. The monitors evaluated 15 separate projects and met with local implementers, the Ambassador, DCM and numerous emboffs to review lessons learned and best practices of Morocco's MEPI projects over the past four years. While the evaluation was generally quite positive, it was important to learn from projects that did not meet expectations. Increased communication with post, improved coordination between Washington and post, and utilizing post's knowledge of local conditions were among the elements identified as helping raise the level of effectiveness of MEPI programming in the past year. The visit highlighted Arab Civitas as worthy of additional funding.

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NEW MEPI SMALL GRANT

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¶4. In March, post approved a new MEPI local grant to Association Action Jeunesse (2AJ). The USD 19,790 grant continues 2AJ's highly successful project to raise awareness about the democratic process by holding student elections in five local schools, organizing democracy round tables, and planning music festivals and sports tournaments to attract large numbers of young people to expose them to the idea of participating in the democratic process.

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ALEF LITERACY  
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¶5. An evaluation of the ALEF literacy training program's initial results by the GOM's Literacy Agency (Direction pour la Lutte Contre l'Analphabétisation - DLCA) was very positive and recommended the adoption, on a national basis, of the materials and methods developed in partnership with the USAID ALEF Project supported with MEPI funding. In total, 8,130 women completed training through this program. In addition, 230 literacy teachers and supervisors were trained to develop and apply texts to inform women on human rights and the Moroccan Family Code, and to integrate the concepts of autonomy into literacy programs.

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ABA ACTIVITIES  
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¶6. During the quarter, ABA organized the second of a series of three roundtables designed to solicit the views of the country's judges regarding the adoption and the substance of a national charter of ethics. This roundtable was attended by more than 200 judges. The discussions were led by panelists from key judicial institutions including the National Judicial Training Center (Institute Supérieur de la Magistrature), the High Judicial Council (Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature) and the Ministry of Justice. The goal of these roundtables is to prepare for the adoption by the Independent Judges Association (Hassania) of a national charter of ethics.

¶7. ABA also organized three events designed to strengthen the Hassania. In January, ABA organized a retreat for the 24 board members of the Hassania in Marrakech to enable them finalize the strategic plan that they had previously started with ABA's assistance. In February, ABA convened a day long training for the Hassania leaders on advocacy skills to help them promote the charter of ethics to other judges and to judicial institutions. Finally, the ABA organized a five-day study to the Netherlands, where the Hassania leadership met with members of the Netherlands Judges and Prosecutors Association (NVvR) and participated in a series of working sessions with various other Dutch judicial and legal organizations. These sessions dealt with topics such as judicial ethics, independence, internal organization and communication, fund raising, and international cooperation. As a result of the study tour, the Hassania has signed an agreement of cooperation with the NVvR.

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MEPI ALUMNI NETWORK ACTIVITIES  
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¶8. The MEPI Alumni Regional Summit was held in Jordan, on February 13-14. The summit attracted over

250 MEPI alumni from 15 different countries in addition to experts and professionals in the fields of civic and economic reforms. The Moroccan delegation members presented five panel discussions including the topics of: Podcasting: An Effective Way to Reach Out to and Engage Young People, The Independent Press and its Role in Expanding the Margins of Public Freedom and Fighting Extremism, and the Dangers of Democracies Without Citizen's Involvement: Analysis and Perspectives. They also led three working groups, among which the Women's Economic Empowerment working group was awarded a MEPI grant to be implemented in Morocco.

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MEPI STUDENTS GATHER IN MOROCCO  
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¶9. Nearly 100 students gathered for a conference in Marrakech from February 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, to discuss civic activism and mobilization, grant writing, fundraising, and media campaigns. The students were 2007 alumni of MEPI's Student Leaders Program, representing 15 Middle Eastern and North African countries and territories. Participants had the opportunity to hear from the DCM and PAO and to meet their American peers, engage in local community and service activities, and learn about the United States. The MEPI Student Leaders Program is an intensive six-week course for students from the Middle East and North Africa to develop leadership skills and expand their understanding of American civil society and democracy.

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MCCE PROJECTS  
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¶10. A number of training sessions in the Project Citizen and Foundations of Democracy projects took place across Morocco. In addition to the workshops, the MCCE has been approached by many institutions, schools and universities, NGOs, and teacher training institutes to present its experience in dealing with Project Citizen and Foundation of Democracy curriculum

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whose main goals are to educate younger generations to become responsible, effective and active citizens committed to democratic principles. Hundreds of student groups have been working on community issues such as lack of adequate infrastructure, dropping out of school, sanitation and drug abuse. They have researched the problems, evaluated the existing public policies and proposed alternative solutions that they will present in May and June 2008.

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ECONOMIC JUSTICE REGIONAL PROGRAM  
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¶11. In March, the Solidarity Center met with the Democratic Confederation of Labor (CDT) to discuss a Plan of Action for the Moroccan portion of a Regional MEPI grant on Economic Justice. During this meeting, the CDT and the Solidarity Center worked to identify a region and an industrial sector in which to initiate the project. CDT representatives from around the country attended the meeting and provided input on where and how best to implement the project which would concentrate on encouraging active participation of current union members and increasing membership in the future. While the MEPI project will be localized in one region, the long-term goal would use the Plan of Action developed in this project to repeat the process around the country. The project is currently slated to continue until July 2009 in Morocco and

December 2009 for the region.

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FSVC PROJECTS  
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¶12. In January 2008, FSVC organized a seminar for Bank Al-Maghrib (BAM) Banking Supervision Department examiners to help them assess current liquidity and interest rate risk measurement and analysis tools, and to recommend improvements. This event also included discussion on supervision methods, as well as U.S. regulatory agencies proposed guidance on liquidity risk management. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Volunteers advice helped BAM advance its ongoing reforms for quantitative management assessments for liquidity.

¶13. In February, FSVC assisted USAID implementer Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) in developing key lender support for market-oriented registry reporting, by enabling exchanges with major lenders to develop benchmarks. FSVC organized two roundtables in collaboration with DAI for senior financial sector managers.

¶14. A detailed description of MEPI programs in Morocco can be found on the Mission unclassified Internet Web site at [www.usembassy.ma](http://www.usembassy.ma).

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